

## **Personal Resources Among Homeless Veterans**

A recent research report by VISN 1 MIRECC researchers points to the relative strengths of homeless veterans when compared with other homeless men. Veterans of the U.S. armed forces are over represented in the ranks of the homeless despite their being screened and found eligible for military service earlier in their lives. To provide clues about these veterans' pathways into and out of homelessness, the current study compared veterans and non veterans in a sample of over four thousand homeless men enrolled in a non-VA outreach program for homeless individuals with severe mental illness. Compared to homeless men who had not served in the military, veterans reported less conduct disorder and family instability in childhood. Veterans were also better educated than non-veterans, less likely to have never been married and more likely to be working for pay. On the other side of the ledger, there is more evidence of alcohol dependence among the veterans. Although homeless veterans and non veterans share common problems of extreme poverty, social isolation and health risks, homeless veterans are more likely to have personal resources to build on as they attempt to improve their lot. Researchers Richard Tessler, Ph.D., Robert Rosenheck, M.D. and Gail Gamache, Ph.D. suggest that services providers address both these potential strengths and substance abuse problems in assisting homeless veterans with their recovery efforts.